

# 1998 California School Recognition Program

## Distinguished Elementary School Application Scoring Rubric

**SCALE:** The Scoring Rubric provides a comprehensive set of quality statements that reflect a consensus of the education community about the elements that should be present in an exemplary school. It may be used by individual schools as a focus for self-assessment. It will be used to evaluate 1998 Distinguished School Applications. The Rubric uses a four-point scale—four (high) to one (low). Each Rubric Level is designed to be a holistic description, not a checklist. Schools selected for recognition typically receive scores of three or four. It is not expected that applying schools will receive level four scores in all areas. In some instances level four describes an ideal condition which is a goal toward which schools are encouraged to strive.

### STANDARDS, ASSESSMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY: Vision and Standards

**1** Describe the process used by your school community for developing and revising a common vision of what students should know, understand, and be able to do upon leaving elementary school. Indicate the roles played by members of your school community. Describe how your school is developing and implementing rigorous content and performance standards. Describe how you will ensure that local standards will be at least as rigorous as state standards when they are adopted. Describe how your school and district examine school level data in order to ensure that progress is made towards schoolwide improvement. Supplement your discussion with the *District Assessment and Accountability Description, 1997-98 Consolidated Application for Funding and Categorical Aid Programs, Part II*, page 33. (Attach form as Addendum 1a.)

Makes A Strong Case (4)	Makes An Adequate Case (3)	Makes A Limited Case (2)	Makes a Minimal Case (1)
All segments of the school community—administrators, teachers, other school staff, families, and community members—collaborate to establish a clear vision of what all students should know, understand, and be able to do. The vision reflects current research and practice, and the cultural and linguistic diversity of the student population. The vision statement is periodically reviewed and adjusted.	School staff, the school site council, and selected parents collaborate to establish a clear vision of what all students should know, understand, and be able to do. This information is communicated to the school community. The vision statement is periodically reviewed and adjusted.	School administrators and teachers determine what students should know and be able to do. This information is communicated to the school community. The vision statement is periodically reviewed by staff.	The school is working on developing a common vision statement of what students should know or be able to do.
The school holds high expectations for all students. Content and performance standards* for most subject areas are either in place or in development. The progress made in development of standards is described, including how local standards will be examined to ensure that they are at least as rigorous as state standards when they are adopted.	The school holds high expectations for all students. Content and performance standards in at least reading/language arts and math are either in place or in development. The progress made in development of standards in reading/language arts and math is described, including how local standards will be examined to ensure that they are at least as rigorous as state standards when they are adopted.	The school holds high expectations for all students. A plan exists to develop content and performance standards. Standards in reading/language arts and math may be in the beginning stages of development. The progress made in development of standards is described.	School administrators and teachers intend to develop content and performance standards. However, no plan is described.
Responsibility for establishing yearly targets based on standards and ensuring progress towards them is clearly indicated. There is a plan to help all students achieve standards, particularly in reading/language arts and math. The school's leadership encourages and celebrates excellence.	Responsibility for establishing yearly targets and ensuring progress toward them is clearly indicated. Several individuals in addition to the principal take responsibility for helping all students achieve standards, especially in reading/language arts and math.	The principal or other administrators and specialists are responsible for accomplishing any yearly targets that are in place. It is not clear what process is used to make sure that targets are accomplished.	There is no evidence that the school community takes responsibility for ensuring that students are successful in achieving appropriate standards.

\* **Content Standards** identify the knowledge, understanding, skills, and abilities that students are expected to learn in subject areas. **Performance Standards** define "how good is good enough." Standards guide teachers and provide the basis for assessment. Standards are determined by consensus among people who have a stake in student achievement — board members, district and school administrators, teachers, families, and the community.

## STANDARDS, ASSESSMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY: Student Assessment

**2** Describe your methods of student assessment, how your assessments are aligned with your standards, and how you measure whether or not students are meeting your standards. Show how teachers use assessment information, including examining student work, to modify curriculum and instruction to improve student achievement. Provide examples in reading/language arts and mathematics. Describe how students are involved in the analysis of their own work. If there are English language learners, describe how their progress is assessed. Show how student results are reported to students, families, and the community. *Assessment methods may include, but are not limited to: teacher evaluation of student work (grades, running records, checklists, portfolios); district-developed assessments, writing samples, math assessments, criterion-referenced assessments, assessments linked to instructional materials; standardized tests, and publisher's norm-referenced tests.* Supplement your discussion with the *1996-97 Student Achievement School Report, Consolidated Application for Funding Categorical Aid Programs, Part II*, page 34. (Attach form as Addendum 2a.) If your assessment system has changed since 1996-97 or is changing, focus your discussion on the current system.

Makes A Strong Case (4)	Makes An Adequate Case (3)	Makes A Limited Case (2)	Makes a Minimal Case (1)
Teachers regularly use a wide range of assessment information to modify curriculum and instruction to improve student achievement. An assessment plan based on multiple measures is in place or being developed. Examples are provided in reading/language arts and math.	There is a process for teachers to periodically use student assessment information to plan for curriculum and instruction. An assessment based on multiple measures is in place or being developed. Examples are provided for reading/language arts and math.	Teachers use student achievement information periodically to plan for curriculum and instruction, but there is no regular process. A plan to develop an assessment based upon multiple measures is described, but lacks detail.	Student achievement information may be examined, but the analysis does not relate to classroom practices. The school intends to develop an assessment based upon multiple measures, but no plan is described.
All teachers meet regularly to analyze student work in all areas, determine what students know, and decide what their next teaching steps should be. There are multiple strategies in place to ensure that teachers apply consistent criteria in judging student work. As a team, all teachers and other members of the school community regularly examine student achievement data and school level data. They analyze the data, make decisions about the entire school, each classroom, and individual students.	All teachers meet at least quarterly to analyze student work in some subject areas. They determine what students know and decide what their next steps should be. There is a strategy in place to ensure that teachers apply consistent criteria in judging student work. Teachers and other members of the school community examine student and school level data. They analyze it to make decisions about the entire school, each classroom, and individual students.	A few teachers meet at least once a year to analyze student work in some areas to determine what students know and decide what their next steps should be. Little attention is given to ensure that teachers apply consistent criteria in judging student work. Teachers, as individuals rather than as a school team, examine test scores and other classroom data and make decisions about their classes and students.	Teachers rely entirely on teacher or text-generated tests, nationally normed tests, and individual worksheets to evaluate students. Teachers and administrators may examine individual student test scores and other data to make decisions. Teachers do not examine school or class level data.
Students often analyze their own work, reflect on their progress, and determine their strengths and weaknesses.	Students sometimes analyze their own work, reflect on their progress, and determine their strengths and weaknesses.	Students rarely analyze their own work. They depend primarily on their teachers to determine their strengths and weaknesses.	There is no evidence that students analyze their own work. They depend on their teachers to determine their strengths and weaknesses.
There is a comprehensive process for communicating individual student assessment results to families. Aggregated assessment results are also communicated to the entire school community.	There is a process for communicating individual student results to families, and aggregated results to some of the school community.	There is a limited process for communicating assessment results to families and the community.	A process of reporting assessment results to families and the school community is not described.
All students with special needs are assessed appropriately to accurately demonstrate their knowledge and growth. If there are English language learners, attention is given to their special assessment needs, and individual student results are communicated to families in their primary language.	Students with special needs are assessed appropriately to accurately demonstrate their knowledge and growth. If there are English language learners, there is a description of how their special assessment needs are met. Efforts are made to communicate results to families in their primary language.	There is some evidence that special needs students are appropriately assessed. If there are English language learners, it is not clear how their assessment needs are addressed, or how families are informed of results.	Assessment for special needs students is not addressed. If there are English language learners, assessment and reporting of results to families are not addressed.

## STANDARDS, ASSESSMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY: School Improvement and Accountability

**3** Describe the development and focus of your school improvement plan. Describe the process you use to align your budget and resources to improve the school program. Describe how the overall success of the school program is evaluated, what measures are used, who participates in the process, and how the results are communicated to the school community. Describe the major challenges your school will face over the next five years, and your strategies to face these challenges. Use school-specific examples and other evidence to support your description.

Makes A Strong Case (4)	Makes An Adequate Case (3)	Makes A Limited Case (2)	Makes a Minimal Case (1)
<p>A school improvement plan has been developed by all segments of the school community. The plan focuses on how the school program will help all students meet content and performance standards. School budget items are aligned closely with the improvement plan.</p> <p>The school uses a variety of methods to evaluate the effectiveness of its overall program each year. All segments of the school community participate in the evaluation process. Results of this process are communicated to all segments of the school community in a variety of ways, and goes beyond the School Accountability Report Card and student report cards. Families of English language learners receive the information in their primary language(s).</p> <p>The school's improvement plan thoroughly and realistically addresses the challenges it will face in the next five years. A plan of action is described to maintain the quality of the educational program, and to adapt to changes in the student population.</p>	<p>A school improvement plan has been developed by all segments of the school community. The plan focuses on how the school program will help all students meet content and performance standards. Efforts are underway to make sure school budget items align more closely with the improvement plan.</p> <p>The school uses a variety of methods to evaluate the success of its program. School staff, with the school site council, participate in the evaluation process. Results of this process are communicated to families and other representatives of the school community in a variety of ways.</p> <p>Challenges to be faced over the next five years are clearly defined, but may not convey a full awareness of the complexity of the school's changing demographics. It is not clear how the school plans to maintain its high quality and momentum.</p>	<p>A school improvement plan is developed by school staff. The plan focuses on the yearly results of assessment data. School budget items are not necessarily aligned with the improvement plan.</p> <p>The school evaluates some aspects of its program. Teachers and administrators participate in the evaluation process. Results of this process are communicated to the school staff. Results are communicated to the community in a limited number of ways.</p> <p>Work is underway with staff and community to develop a comprehensive plan to maintain program quality and address major educational challenges over the next five years.</p>	<p>It is not clear that a yearly improvement plan is in place. School budget items may be determined by administrators, staff, the school site council, or individual teachers, but not as a cohesive group.</p> <p>The school does not evaluate its program comprehensively. Individual students' assessment data are available to teachers and families.</p> <p>Major educational challenges to be faced over the next five years are presented in a superficial manner. It is not clear how quality and momentum will be maintained.</p>

## TEACHING AND LEARNING: Curriculum Content and Instructional Practices

4

Describe how the school provides a comprehensive and balanced core curriculum in all subject areas that is articulated across grade levels. Give specific examples from one curriculum area. In the examples, describe how the curriculum is aligned with the school's content and performance standards. Describe how you provide all students with challenging learning experiences. Describe the school's involvement in curriculum development and the selection of instructional materials. Describe the library/media services that support the curriculum. If there are English language learners, describe how the curriculum is provided to them. Use school-specific examples and other evidence.

### Makes A Strong Case (4)

A comprehensive core curriculum is provided to all students across all grade levels in all curriculum areas—reading/language arts, math, science, history/social science, visual and performing arts, physical education and health. It includes content knowledge, application of basic skills, problem-solving, and comprehension. Current educational research and practice have been utilized in curriculum planning. Specific examples of the core curriculum are provided in one content area which demonstrate the alignment of the curriculum with content and performance standards.

The curriculum is articulated across grade levels including articulation with middle school. The staff uses a variety of instructional methods and groupings to meet the needs of all students. There is a balance between independent and collaborative student work, teacher-directed and student-centered instruction, whole group instruction, flexible groupings, and individualized work. Extensions are provided for students who seek additional challenges.

Curriculum development and the selection of instructional materials involve the whole school community and are focused on the alignment with content and performance standards. The materials reflect current educational research and practice. They are examined on a regular basis to determine their effectiveness.

Learning activities are supported by utilization of a high-quality library/media center with full-time staff, current technology, and learning resources to meet the diverse needs of students. The library/media center is available to students and families beyond the school day.

If there are English-language learners, instruction is available in the home language(s), and instructional resources reflect the cultural and linguistic diversity of the students.

### Makes An Adequate Case (3)

A comprehensive core curriculum in *most* subject areas is provided to all students. Current educational research and practice have been utilized in curriculum planning. It includes content knowledge, application of basic skills, problem-solving, and comprehension. The school is in the process of aligning its curriculum with content and performance standards.

The school is planning an articulated core curriculum across grade levels that may be partially implemented. A variety of instructional methods and groupings are occurring in most classrooms and curricular areas. Plans describe how balance will be achieved between independent and collaborative student work, teacher-directed and student-centered instruction, whole-group instruction, flexible groupings, and individualized work.

School and district staff participate in curriculum development and solicit community input. There is a plan to align instructional materials with content and performance standards. A process for reviewing alignment is clearly described, and may be implemented in some areas. A process is being developed to examine the effectiveness of instructional materials.

Learning activities are supported by a library/media center with paid staff, current technology, and a variety of learning resources. The library is open all day.

If there are English-language learners, some instructional materials in the students' home language(s) are available at the school site.

### Makes A Limited Case (2)

The application makes general statements that a comprehensive core curriculum is provided to all students. It is not clear that efforts are being made to align the curriculum with content and performance standards.

The application makes general statements that school staff meets periodically for curriculum articulation across grade levels. The staff relies upon textbooks to provide rigor within the curriculum areas. Students may work in groups or independently. Individual students receive additional help on an as-needed basis. Learning occurs in whole group and small group instruction.

Members of the school community are involved in the selection of textbooks and instructional materials at the district or site level. School level staff help to develop curriculum and make curriculum decisions. It is not clear if the effectiveness of the instructional materials has been examined.

Learning activities are supported by a library kept open by volunteers. Some technology and learning resources are available.

If there are English-language learners, instructional materials may be checked out from the district on an as-needed basis in the students' home language(s).

### Makes a Minimal Case (1)

It is not clear that a comprehensive core curriculum is provided. The curriculum for some students may be remedial in nature and may be presented in pull-out programs.

Articulation across grade levels of a balanced curriculum is not addressed. Learning is developed through whole-group instruction and traditional ability groups most of the time.

District or school staff are involved in the selection of textbooks. Instructional materials may be purchased by individual teachers to enhance or extend their lessons. The effectiveness of the —materials is not addressed.

Learning activities are supported by a library.

If there are English-language learners, the availability of home language materials is not addressed.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING: Special Needs and At-Risk Students

5

Describe the learning support services and personalized assistance provided to students with special needs. Describe the processes by which special needs and at-risk students are ensured access to and success in the core curriculum. Discuss strategies and/or programs you use with students who exhibit behavior problems, do not attend school regularly, and/or are experiencing problems outside of school. Include evidence that learning support services are working. Describe the staff development provided to your teachers in order to support your special needs students. Use school-specific examples and other evidence to support your description. *Special needs and at-risk students include gifted and talented students; English language learners; students from culturally and ethnically diverse backgrounds; students receiving special education services; students not achieving their identified learning potential; students not meeting the school's performance standards; students in individualized programs; students with health needs; students who exhibit behavior problems; and students who do not attend school regularly.*

### Makes A Strong Case (4)

The school provides a well-thought-out and comprehensive approach to meeting the needs of special needs and at-risk students. They are provided full access to the core curriculum and additional learning support services are provided to ensure that they are successful. Special education students are transitioned to and supported in mainstream classes, including full inclusion. English language learners are provided access to the core curriculum through classes taught in English by CLAD certified teachers or instruction provided in their primary language. Effective instruction is provided in acquiring English language skills.

It is clear that this school takes responsibility for meeting the needs of all students. There is a coordinated process by which students with special needs are identified and help provided. Administrators, teachers, counselors, families, other school staff and community members act early and work together to determine successful interventions. Strategies such as use of a student study team (or student success team)\* and family-school compacts determine how the school and family will help the student succeed. Evidence demonstrates that those interventions have been successful.

A variety of comprehensive learning support services are provided within the regular classroom, or in special intervention programs which focus on small group or individual instruction activities. The support services are well coordinated to effectively utilize the resources of the school and community. The school provides extended learning activities beyond the typical school day. Evidence demonstrates that the special interventions are having positive results.

### Makes An Adequate Case (3)

Special needs students are provided access to the core curriculum and additional learning support services are provided. Schools with large numbers of special needs students are clearly working to improve ways of meeting their needs. Information is provided on ways in which special education are transitioned to mainstream classes. English language learners are provided access to the core curriculum and instruction is provided in acquiring English language skills.

A process is in place for using the resources of the school, families, and community to work with students who are experiencing difficulties. Coordination of responsibilities may not be clearly defined. School staff work with families to determine successful interventions. Strategies such as use of a student study team (or student success team) and family-school compacts determine how the school and family will help the student succeed. There is some evidence that interventions have been successful.

A variety of comprehensive learning support services are provided within the regular classroom or in special intervention programs which focus on small group or individual instruction activities. Although the support services appear comprehensive, it may not be clear to the reader how or if they are coordinated with each other at the school site.

### Makes A Limited Case (2)

There is general information that special education students are being mainstreamed. Discussion of other special needs groups may focus on remediation. Some special needs students may be provided access to the core curriculum and may meet the same standards as other students.

There is some evidence that the school proactively takes responsibility for meeting the needs of all students and that those efforts have had some success. Individual teachers develop plans to help students succeed.

Support services are provided by traditional categorical program pull-out strategies with little collaboration between resource staff and classroom teachers.

### Makes a Minimal Case (1)

No evidence is provided that special needs students are provided with the core curriculum, or that they are able to meet the same standards as other students. Discussion focuses on remediation.

It is not clear that anyone at the school takes responsibility for helping students with special needs to succeed in school.

There is minimal evidence of student learning support services or appropriate interventions. There are no alternatives to full group instruction.

\* **Student Study or Student Success Team:** A school site team that is a function of regular education, includes the parent and student, uses a problem-solving approach to assist students who are not progressing satisfactorily, clarifies problems and concerns, develops strategies and organizes resources, and provides a system for accountability. (Excerpted from "Student Success Teams: Supporting Teachers in General Education," California Department of Education, 1997.)

## TEACHING AND LEARNING: Integration of Technology

6

Discuss the ongoing process of integrating technology into the total school program. Describe your plan for technology use. Show how professional development needs are met. Show how students, teachers, library/media teachers, other support staff, and community and business partners are provided various information and learning resources. Include the accommodations that have been made to assure appropriate technical assistance for staff and students. *Include examples of data usage—e.g., how many, how often, etc.* Show the extent of electronic networking infrastructure throughout the site and beyond. Explain funding, and describe how your school utilizes family and community resources and is involved in regional coordination to maximize effectiveness of technology integration. Use school-specific examples and other evidence.

### Makes A Strong Case (4)

Teaching, learning, and administration of school programs are accomplished with appropriate technology such as computers, telecommunications, other media, etc. Technology is used to help students increase their knowledge and skills, to expand the depth and scope of curriculum, and to access information outside the classroom. There is evidence that high-quality training for the effective use of technology in the teaching/learning process is provided on an ongoing basis.

All students and school personnel have convenient access to a wide array of information and learning resources in a variety of formats, such as the internet, on-line networks, databases, etc. Resources are utilized by parents and community members. Students use technology in a variety of learning activities.

There is a well-structured organization of contacts for technical assistance which provides help in a timely fashion. An on-site lead person has been identified for immediate needs, and staff have access to outside assistance as necessary. The lead person may be a library/media teacher, information specialist, classroom teacher, network manager, or other qualified person.

The impetus for change is a clear vision of the instructional, learning, and administrative advantages that can be provided through technology. Well-planned electronic networking at the site and beyond is in place or being implemented. Evaluation of effectiveness is built into the planning structure. There is a plan to update essential technology.

The funding of technology is used to enhance the quality of education provided for students. Technology is integral to all regular, categorical, and special programs. A broad range of opportunities to collaborate and share resources with outside sources have been utilized.

### Makes An Adequate Case (3)

In most cases, teaching, learning, and the administration of school programs are accomplished with appropriate technology. Technology is used to help students increase their knowledge and skills, and to expand the depth and scope of curriculum. There is evidence that training for the effective use of technology in the teaching/learning process is provided.

Most students and school personnel have access to a wide array of information and learning resources. Students are guided by their teachers in the use of technological tools. Technology support may be limited to a technology or computer lab that is accessible to students during and beyond normal school hours. Technology-proficient staff are available.

There is an on-site person available to provide technical assistance. Coordinated technology assistance may be provided at the district level.

Planning and implementation of electronic networking at the site and beyond are underway. The instructional and administrative advantages that can be provided through technology are well understood.

Technology is seen as appropriate to all regular, categorical, and special programs. Numerous opportunities to obtain funding from outside sources have been sought.

### Makes A Limited Case (2)

There are some examples of appropriate use of technology for teaching, learning, and administration of school programs. Technology is used primarily as a tool to assist teachers in the management of the instructional program. Some training for the use of technology is provided.

Technology is available to students for specific purposes such as word processing or information retrieval. Technology is available for those who are most interested or most in need, but less accessible to “general” students.

Some technology assistance is provided.

A plan exists for networking within the site.

Opportunities to obtain funding from outside sources are being explored.

### Makes a Minimal Case (1)

Technology is used primarily as a record-keeping and data collection tool for teachers. Student access to technology, if any, is limited to beginning computer literacy. Technology training rarely occurs.

Some access to electronic information and learning resources is available; however, learning and information resources are primarily print-based.

No on-site technology assistance is formally available.

No technology plan exists within the school.

Funding for technology is extremely limited. Opportunities to obtain funding from outside sources have not been considered.

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: Teacher Professionalism

**7** Describe the processes by which teacher professionalism is supported. Describe the staff development activities that are provided, particularly in reading and mathematics, and how they are selected. Discuss support activities designed for new teachers, teachers new to a grade level, and teachers in reduced-size classes. Describe the opportunities that are available for teachers to collaborate with each other, broaden their knowledge, provide mentoring and other leadership, and participate in decision-making. *Your discussion may include, but is not limited to participation in Subject Matter Projects, collaborative networks and professional organizations; internships; teacher release time; maintaining a professional library; etc.*

Makes A Strong Case (4)	Makes An Adequate Case (3)	Makes A Limited Case (2)	Makes a Minimal Case (1)
The content of professional development is based on school needs and student achievement. The primary focus of professional development promotes student success in a standards-based curriculum. It also includes strengthening subject-matter expertise including reading instruction and classroom management. Examples are provided for strengthening reading/language arts and math. There is an ongoing plan for staff development, and its effectiveness is evaluated.	The content of professional development is based on school needs and student achievement. The primary focus of professional development is on implementing a standards-based curriculum. Professional development also includes strengthening subject-matter expertise and classroom management. Examples are provided for strengthening reading/language arts and math.	Plans are being developed to have professional development focused on a standards-based curriculum. Professional development will include strengthening subject-matter expertise and classroom management.	The professional development program at the site is determined by individual teachers based on their interests and classroom needs.
New teachers or teachers new to a grade level are carefully recruited, selected, and supported within the school community during their first years of teaching. Professional development is provided for teachers in reduced-size classes emphasizing instructional strategies for smaller groups.	New teachers or teachers new to a grade level are carefully selected and supported during their first years of teaching. Professional development is provided for teachers in reduced-size classes.	Support for new teachers or teachers new to a grade level is limited to a mentor teacher. Professional development may be provided for teachers in reduced-size classes.	There is minimal support for new teachers or teachers new to a grade level. There may not be professional development related to class size reduction.
Teachers are empowered to make decisions about curriculum, instruction, staff development, discipline, teacher and program evaluation, school operations, and other policy matters. Opportunities are routinely scheduled for teachers to work and plan collaboratively, and to share current educational research. There are opportunities to articulate with preschool and middle school staff about the children they serve to facilitate positive transitions for students and families.	Teachers are empowered to make decisions about curriculum, instruction, staff development, discipline, teacher and program evaluation, school operations, and other policy matters. There are frequent opportunities for teachers to work and plan collaboratively and to share information.	Some teachers serve on committees within the school such as the school site council, the student study/student success team, etc. Teachers and administrations are working on increasing teacher involvement in the operation of the school. There are some opportunities for teachers to work and plan collaboratively and to share information.	Most of the decisions about staff development are made by the principal with input from some teachers. Teachers have little opportunity to work and plan collaboratively and to share information.
Teachers are encouraged to expand their roles, grow professionally, and use research-based best practices. Teachers participate in a variety of staff development activities. School staff are frequently the providers of staff development for their colleagues. There is a high degree of job satisfaction.	Teachers are encouraged to take advantage of professional development opportunities at the district, county, and regional levels. Opportunities are provided at staff meetings for teachers to share what they learned from their professional development.	Teachers may participate in professional development opportunities at the district, county, or regional level, but support by the school or district is not provided. Opportunities to share information are not provided.	Teachers do not attend workshops and inservices on a consistent basis. The school or district does not fiscally support staff development for its teachers.
Staff development related to special needs students reflects the demographics of the school. Staff development about the causes of school failure and behavioral difficulties is provided, and examples are given of positive results. Teachers are recognized for making exceptional efforts with students.	Staff development related to special needs students reflects the demographics of the school. Staff development about the causes of school failure and behavioral difficulties is provided.	Staff development related to special needs students is discussed. It is not clear if it is related to the school's demographics.	Staff development related to special needs students, if discussed at all, is not connected to the school's demographics. It does not include topics related to school failure or behavioral difficulties.

## PARTNERSHIPS AMONG FAMILIES, SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES: Family Involvement

**8** Describe the strategies and activities you use to ensure that families—which may include parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, foster parents, stepparents, guardians, or other care-givers—are collaborative partners in the education of their children, and to ensure that teachers and families are encouraged to work together for the benefit of the children. Your discussion may include, but is not limited to, strategies and activities that you use to support families in their roles as leaders and decision makers in school programs and policies; as teachers and supporters of their children's learning; as communicators between the home and the school about their children's progress; and as informed consumers of the educational and support services provided by the school and the broader community. Use school-specific examples and other evidence to support your description. Show how you communicate with families who are not fluent in English, if there are language groups other than English in the community.

Makes A Strong Case (4)	Makes An Adequate Case (3)	Makes A Limited Case (2)	Makes a Minimal Case (1)
The school has a comprehensive and systematic plan to involve the families of its students, and effectively uses the resources of families and community members to help students achieve schoolwide standards. They are viewed as critical members of the school leadership team and participate in determining a common vision for the school.	There are many independent connections and activities that involve families and the community, but there may not be an ongoing, systematic approach to utilize those resources. A planning effort is underway. The school makes an effort to know the community served by the school.	The school tries to make the best use of family members who offer to participate at the school, but there is no overall plan for tapping the skills and talents of families.	The talents and skills of family members are viewed in traditional ways. Families are seen as valuable primarily for fund-raising, and are not seen as a resource for students' academic success.
Families are actively offered a variety of options for contributing to the school's and student's success. Many family and community members volunteer at the school and participate as decision makers. They receive information and/or training to help them be active participants in decision-making.	The principal and some faculty meet periodically with families to discuss specific issues. Some family members regularly volunteer at the school and serve on committees that focus on providing resources and support for both academic and non-academic issues.	Family members occasionally serve in advisory roles, particularly for input on policy decisions related to student behavior and attendance.	Families participate in social and extra-curricular activities, and booster clubs that support those activities. Often the same group are the only ones actively involved. Families are not encouraged to play a role in academic or policy decisions.
Families are actively involved in ongoing two-way communication between the home and school and they are informed about community services and resources. Teachers are trained to work effectively with families. Families receive assistance during transitions from pre-school and to middle school.	The school regularly communicates with families about programs, policies, events, procedures, and deadlines through newsletters and bulletins. Some attempt is also made to encourage two way communication between the home and school about a child's needs or schoolwide student needs.	The school informs families about programs, policies, events, procedures, and deadlines through newsletters and bulletins. Communication is primarily from the school to the home, although the school responds to inquiries.	Communication between the school and families appears to be limited and generally one-way. Families know little about the day-to-day operations of the school.
Families support their students' learning through activities such as family-school compacts,* programs to inform them about curriculum and assessment, use of library/media resources, on-site parent centers, extended-day programs for students, etc. Families are offered parenting and adult education classes to support their children's development.	Families help support student learning through strategies such as family-school compacts, programs to inform them about curriculum and assessment, use of library/media resources, on-site parent centers, etc.	Families receive information about supporting student learning through parent-family/teacher conferences, report card comments, newsletters, etc.	There is no evidence that families are given assistance in supporting student learning.
The cultural and linguistic diversity of students' families are valued throughout the school. Communication is routinely conducted with families in the appropriate home language(s).	The cultural and linguistic diversity of students' families are acknowledged and respected. Communication is often conducted in the appropriate home language(s).	The cultural and linguistic diversity of students' families are acknowledged and respected. Communication is sometimes conducted in home language(s).	The cultural and linguistic diversity of families may be acknowledged. The issue of home language communication is not addressed.

\* **Family-school compacts** are voluntary agreements between the home and school that describe specific activities that teachers, families, administrators, and the student will undertake to support the student's learning. (As defined by State Board of Education policy and the Improving America's Schools Act, IASA.)



## PARTNERSHIPS AMONG FAMILIES, SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES: Community Connections

9 Describe the mechanisms that you have in place to ensure that the school and community are engaged in partnerships that support student learning. Discuss relationships you have developed with the community. Describe the effect that these relationships have on students and the school. *The community may include, but is not limited to, a middle and/or high school, community agencies, businesses, industries, government agencies, community organizations, colleges and universities, and other entities appropriate to your area.* Describe the school's efforts to engage the interest of and involve the non-parent community—i.e., those who do not have school-age children in the school. Use school-specific examples and other evidence to support your description.

Makes A Strong Case (4)	Makes An Adequate Case (3)	Makes A Limited Case (2)	Makes a Minimal Case (1)
Teachers utilize the resources of the community when developing curriculum and instruction through strategies such as service-learning* and by including the talents and skills of families and other community members.	The school is working with community entities to expand the curriculum through such strategies as service learning, and by including the talents and skills of families and other community members.	The school has relationships with local entities, but they are not specifically focused on ways to include the talents and skills of families and other community members.	There is minimal evidence the school is moving in the direction of providing world-outside-the-classroom opportunities for students.
There is a strong, positive connection between students and the community. Activities that link students to the larger community are clearly described.	There is a positive connection between students and the community. Activities that link some students to the larger community and are clearly described.	Planning is underway to develop connections between students and community. Activities that link students to the larger community are being explored.	There is minimal or no evidence that supports a connection between students and the community.
The school has well-established partnerships with businesses and community entities. Relationships are designed not only to provide monetary or material support to the school, but also to strengthen curriculum, expand student learning experiences, and provide opportunities for students to contribute to their community.	The school has some partnerships with businesses and community entities. Relationships provide monetary or material support to the school, and also provide some opportunities for students to contribute to their community.	The school may have one or two partnerships with businesses and community entities, and is developing others. The relationships are primarily designed to provide monetary or material support to the school.	The school has no partnerships with businesses or community entities.
The school-community partnerships have had a positive influence upon the students. <i>Positive results may include strengthening students' sense of civic responsibility, demonstrating that their involvement can have a positive impact in their community, and improving academic performance in topics that have been enhanced by experiences beyond the classroom.</i>	The school-community partnerships have had a positive influence upon the student learning.	The school-community partnerships may be too limited to have an influence on student learning.	It is not clear that the school is aware of the value of school-community partnerships to student learning.
Students have frequent and various opportunities to observe different careers in the public, private, and nonprofit sectors, and the variety of people who are involved in those careers.	Students have some opportunities to observe different careers in the public, private, and nonprofit sectors, and the variety of people who are involved in those careers.	Students have few or limited opportunities to observe different careers and the variety of people who are involved in those careers.	Students have no opportunities to observe different careers or the variety of people who are involved in those careers.
The school has some strategies to engage the interest of and involve its non-parent community.	The school is developing a plan to engage the interest of and involve its non-parent community.	The school is aware of the importance of involving the non-parent community, but there are no efforts to do so at this time.	It is not clear that the school is aware of the importance of involving the non-parent community.

\* **Service Learning** is a method by which students learn through participating in thoughtfully-organized voluntary service within the local community. Service Learning is integrated into and enhances the core curriculum, provides structured time for students to reflect on their experience, and helps foster civic responsibility. (U. S. Code, Title 42, Section 12511, Ch. 23, 1995.)

## PARTNERSHIPS AMONG FAMILIES, SCHOOLS & COMMUNITIES: Safe & Healthy Schools & Coordinated Services

**10** Describe the strategies you have used to ensure for all students a safe, clean, and secure learning environment that reflects the importance of education in our society. Show how you ensure that the school is free from drugs, alcohol, tobacco, crime, and violence. Describe your standards for student behavior and strategies for conflict resolution. Discuss how your school supports the coordination of health, mental health, social, and law enforcement services for students and families within the community.

Makes A Strong Case (4)	Makes An Adequate Case (3)	Makes A Limited Case (2)	Makes a Minimal Case (1)
<p>There is a positive schoolwide focus on children's safety, health, and well-being. Students, families, and school staff believe their school is safe, secure, and health-oriented, and that maximum potential and success are promoted. Programs are in place to inform students about the effects of drugs, alcohol, and tobacco. Evidence of success includes an annual research-based assessment of school environment factors, e.g., the School Crime Survey, Healthy Start Survey, etc.</p> <p>The school's physical environment reflects the importance of education and learning in society. Resources, including those from the community, are provided to ensure that the buildings and grounds are clean and in good repair. School and classroom environments are stimulating and reflect pride in school and student work. (Subject to validation by a review team if the school is selected to receive a site visit.)</p> <p>Expectations for students' behavior at the school and in the community are well-known and accepted. Everyone receives fair and equitable treatment. Programs are in place which help students learn to deal with conflict in a nonviolent manner, such as conflict resolution, mentoring, peer mediation, etc. Evidence of success as a result of these programs is provided.</p> <p>The school has well-established partnerships with local law enforcement agencies, health, mental health, and social service providers from within and outside the school to ensure coordination of services to students and their families. Evidence of success in meeting student needs is provided.</p> <p>Students who need health-related or other types of intervention are referred with family approval to support services that meet their specific needs. When possible, services are coordinated with the school site by the school nurse, Healthy Start Coordinator, or other qualified person.</p>	<p>There is a positive schoolwide focus on children's safety, health, and well-being. Students, families and school staff believe that the school is safe, secure, and health-oriented, and that maximum potential and success are promoted. Programs are in place to inform students about the effects of drugs, alcohol, and tobacco.</p> <p>School repairs and maintenance are completed when necessary, but the process may not be proactive or ongoing in nature. School and classroom environments are stimulating and reflect pride in school and student work.</p> <p>Expectations for behavior and performance are disseminated and discussed on request. Efforts to include mutual respect, appreciation for diversity, and conflict resolution skills are visible in programs and policies.</p> <p>The school collaborates with law enforcement agencies, and also works closely with health, mental health, and social service providers to ensure coordination of services to students and families. This process may be just beginning. Roles of the persons involved are emerging.</p> <p>Students who need health-related or other types of intervention are referred with family approval to support service providers that meet their specific needs.</p>	<p>Policies and procedures to ensure a secure environment and student well-being are described. Students, families, and school staff believe that the school's environment is conducive to successful learning.</p> <p>There is limited information that the school community has explored resources for making needed repairs or enhancing the facilities or campus. The campus may show evidence of graffiti and/or disrepair.</p> <p>Expectations for performance and behavior are not clear. Formal, well-thought out processes for conflict resolution skill-building are not in place.</p> <p>There is limited collaboration with law enforcement agencies. The school is developing a process to coordinate with health, mental health, and social services. Roles of the persons involved are unclear.</p> <p>Families may be informed if there are indications that their student may need health-related or other intervention, but no assistance is provided.</p>	<p>Student safety, health, and well-being issues are generally addressed.</p> <p>There is limited information that the school community has explored resources for making needed repairs or enhancing the facilities or campus. The campus may show evidence of graffiti and/or disrepair.</p> <p>There is no discussion of expectations for performance and behavior, or efforts to integrate personal/social skills enhancement into the school program.</p> <p>There is no evidence of collaboration with law enforcement agencies, or that the school is working to connect students with health, mental health and social services where needed.</p> <p>There is no evidence that the school takes responsibility for making sure that families are informed and students are referred for services.</p>